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THE

# McALL MISSION

## IN FRANCE

### Quarterly Record

EDITED BY

MRS. G. THEOPHILUS DODDS.

VOL. IV. No. 8.

OCTOBER, 1890.

PRICE 1D.

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#### EDITORIAL.

“**T**HERE remaineth still very much land to be possessed.” And yet, three months can hardly pass over our heads without our having to record some new step in the direction of possession of the fair land of France for Christ.

New openings have been taken advantage of in Aurillac, opened in July by M. Bonnin, and in Poitiers where Mr. Migault has opened a second hall.

Besançon is being started this Autumn, and in Avignon a soldiers' reading-room

is to be opened in October by M. Fontayne, with some help from the Mission. We hope to give fuller details of these in our next number.

By turning the page our readers will see an interesting account of the opening of a new and better hall in the wild district of Pantin, in the outskirts of Paris.

The meetings in Paris itself have been well filled all the Summer, owing partly, doubtless, to its having been cooler than usual. This has also been helpful to the workers who have remained in Paris through the warm season.

The Missionary boat heaved anchor on the 15th of July, but her work remains behind her. One little incident impressed me so much that I must tell it.

Two of the Evangelists were going to see about a tug to take her down the river; they took a cab by the hour, and when about to pay the coachman, he said he would take their word for it as to the time they had had the cab, for he believed what they said would be true. He then told them he had been at the boat one day with his sons, and heard one of them (Mr. Brown) speak, and what he said had touched him deeply. "I will never forget what you said, it has changed my life." They spoke to him and shook hands, but forgot to take his address. That cabman may be just one of the crowd who came and went, and whom we may never more hear of, and yet, a changed life and a saved soul is the result. Is this not cheering?

We feel that if the idea of a permanent house-boat for the canals and rivers of France is carried out, it may be the means of much blessing, and we would urge friends to help to raise the needful funds.

We must now, alas! turn to our losses. Mr. David Paton, of Alloa, has passed away; one of the earliest friends of the Mission, and during many years, its most constant and most generous supporter. Not twice, or thrice, we believe, in a time of straits, just when it was most wanted, has Dr. McAll received a quiet cheque, with the injunction to name no names, for £500, £600, £800, or even £1000. Even during the last year of his life, his unexpected gifts were the means of maintaining work which must otherwise have dropped. One cannot help feeling, this man knew the true luxury of being rich, which is the luxury of being able to give. Sorely will this true friend be missed, and his memory will ever be associated with the progress and the future of the work of evangelisation in France.

Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, who helped the work at Cannes, is also much regretted.

The Committee in Paris will shortly be deprived of the valued aid of one of the colleagues, Rev. T. Howard Gill, who is leaving the British chaplaincy for the living of Tunbridge. The Committee will greatly miss the kind help and wise counsel that Mr. Gill afforded them, and the hearty sympathy that he always manifested in the progress of the work of the Mission. Mr. Gill addressed several meetings in London last spring, in behalf of the Mission, in company with Dr. McAll and Dr. Pierson, of America.

### Some of my Experiences in Paris, June, 1890.

SIX years is a long time in the history of so young a work as the McAll Mission; in fact, the third part of its existence. Divided very roughly, the Mission history may be said to fall into three periods of six years. The first, that of small modest halls among the poor of the faubourgs. The second, marked by sudden and wonderful expansion in and round Paris, and especially in the provinces. While the third has been a period of internal consolidation, and has seen the formation of the popular churches.

May we call the three periods infancy, childhood, early youth? What is the next to be? An early manhood of sinewy spiritual strength? A strong power of resistance to evil, growing up in the heart of France, doing battle for truth and righteousness, and bidding defiance to the insolent and triumphant foe who has so long had it his own way? "I write unto young men, because ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one." Whether it be in six years or sixty, such is the maturity which we hope and pray for.

But to return. It is this third period of six years, during which I have been absent from the work, and about which I am constantly asked, "Did you see much progress? Much change?"

Before answering, let me just record my

thankfulness that I found so many things *unchanged*. As I set my foot on French soil a trembling seized me lest there should be too much progress, sweeping away the old landmarks and making almost a new Mission. I need not have feared. My first feeling was, "I might have been here yesterday; nothing is altered." I hardly think any other work could have shown so little evidence of the lapse of time, so far as the "personnel" was concerned. New faces, of course, there were in plenty, and new friends to be made; but, with a few exceptions,—on which I dare not touch, for some of them bring sad, tender thoughts,—the old friends did not fail to greet me. Dr. and Mrs. McAll still go their rounds, as they have done for the last eighteen years, counting the leadership of a meeting only a rest and recreation after the often harassing business labours of the day. They are only samples of the rest. Everywhere the same workers going to the same districts on the same days of the week, with the same contempt of late hours and hard work, and the same forgetfulness of self. For six, eight, twelve years, they have been going on;—pastors, evangelists, laymen, organists, Bible-women, and the simple, honest men who are doorkeepers in the house of their God. It was good to see them standing in the old posts as if they had never moved. I could mention a long list of names which are present to my mind as I write, but I will not. They know, and some others know, what their faithful work has been.

Evidently the McAll Mission is not a work which people can lightly leave. The heart once put into it remains in it.

A good many of the workers to whom I refer of course are English, but quite a majority are French, and "French people are so fickle," it is said. True, when their hearts are empty of faith, and their lives void of worthy aim; but, perhaps, the hope of eternal life and the love of Christ change the character in this respect. I can only speak as I have found them, of faithful love to the living

and the dead, and of untiring, patient, often secret, unobtrusive, and almost unnoticed work.

I said the workers went to the same *districts* year after year, I could hardly say to the same *halls*. The changes in stone and lime have been marvellous, and generally for the better. The old hall at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli, where the dirtiest of people used to crowd in night after night—some said to get warmed—has disappeared; its successor, Boulevard Sebastopol, has come and gone, and now in its place are not one, but two or three large halls in densely crowded streets, St. Denis, Temple, and Salle Rivoli,—the last redeemed from its evil uses as a rendezvous of atheists, anarchists, and lovers of guilty pleasure; washed and purified materially and morally, and consecrated, with its 600 seats, to the service of the Lord.

The hall in Rue St. Honoré has given place to the large new one in Rue Royale, where the fashionable passers by, on Sunday afternoons, hear music through the wide open doors, and pause, sometimes to enter. Grenelle, with its faithful lay-pastor, Bible-woman, door-keeper, all three in their old places, yet has changed its externals marvellously from the dear old narrow room to the freshest, airiest, best planned, most high-roofed hall in Paris. Schoolrooms, play-ground, and even garden, make it an ideal place for work among young and old, and it has been built by the Mission and for the Mission. Mr. Greig's hall at Bercy is another of the same sort, of smaller dimensions. As I described it last time, I must not linger here.

Some of the halls I found as I left them,—such as Ivry, Rue d'Allemagne, St. Antoine, Ornano. Only those who know can imagine the joy it was to be in these old places again, and find in every one of them those who claimed friendship, whether known to me by sight or not. Some halls, too, looked familiar, although their places had been changed slightly, round a corner, or up a street,



such as the Ternes Hall, where the Medical Mission is doing such a good work.

At my last visit the dispensaries had suffered a temporary check, so I was particularly glad to see how successful the work is now, as a means of winning the souls, as well as of helping the bodies of the sick poor. And I heartily enjoyed making acquaintance with the excellent Dr. Estrabaud, who has succeeded Dr. Anderson, a real French Medical Missionary to his own countrymen. He is a quiet unpretending man. But the confidence of these simple people in their doctor is unbounded. His power to relieve their bodies makes them inclined to believe his word implicitly on every subject.

A man came to him one day, and putting his hand to his side, said, "I have a pain *here*." The physician set to work, according to the most approved methods, to find out whether heart, lungs, or some other organ was at fault. "Oh, no," said the man, when at last he saw that the doctor was puzzled, "it is not that; it was the words I heard in the meeting that gave me the pain." Cheerfully did Dr. Estrabaud prescribe for that trouble.

Dr. E. works at present at Ternes and at Gare d'Ivry, but it was gladdening to learn that he has the prospect also of re-opening at Grenelle. To no better use could the commodious new rooms be dedicated. And memories of blessing in the old days, and in the old narrow hall, may surely be translated into confidence that the Lord will send yet more blessing in days to come.

It is not in external matters, however, like new halls or added workers, that the widest, deepest, most far-reaching changes are to be found. There are causes of thankfulness far greater than these. There are things which one can hardly put into words, and yet, which make one feel unmistakably that the spiritual atmosphere is changing, is growing warmer, nay, that the Spirit of God Himself is there.

Many things which one could once only pray for and dream of, in trembling hope and fear, seem now within touch—are become present realities.

But I must leave these to speak of in our next number. EDITOR.

*To be Continued.*

### Incidents of the Missionary Boat, by one who laboured in it.

THE audiences at our meetings were very mixed, from the consequential lady and gentleman to the street urchin; but, with few exceptions, after the first moments of surprise, our listeners were respectful, attentive, and even sympathetic. By these meetings on the boat we have reached a new contingent of sinners in the midst of our Parisian society, till then strangers to the Gospel. Had this been the only result, the work carried on had been a real success, for we should have been carrying out the commandment of our Master, "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

But, besides this, we can say that from this time the work of God has begun in very many hearts, a work which the Holy Spirit will deepen unto salvation.

Let me now give some examples. One day a young man, with a fine open face and well dressed, said to me, "For several days I have been without work, my savings permitting me to wait and look out for a good place. Meanwhile, I am profiting by your good conferences, where I am glad to hear, in regard to religion, things quite new to me, and which I desire to know more about." Since then, I have seen this young man several times at our evening meetings. He has become one of our regular attendants.

Another young man, whom I had noticed at different times, and who always appeared most serious, said to me in reply to a question, "Yes, sir, I begin to understand that what you say is the truth." Later on, I spoke to him again, and he said, "Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ. I want to live

according to the Gospel; and not only that," added he, with as much seriousness as naive simplicity, "but I should like to become a preacher like you."

Another day, a young man came, accompanied by some companions, and with a mocking smile on his lips. By degrees his expression changed. After two or three meetings his companions dropped off, but he returned alone. He always sat in the same place, and sang and listened quite earnestly. I asked him one day about his spiritual state. He could not answer, but I felt that a good work was going on in his heart. He told me that, since coming to our meetings, he has ventured into a Protestant church, and that the simplicity and beauty of our religion had greatly impressed him. I gave him the address of the hall near which he lived, and he said to me that he would certainly attend the meetings there.

Another time, a gentleman, a merchant from the provinces, waited for me at the door. That day we had to some extent touched on controversy on the subject of "confession of sins." "It is the first time," said this gentleman, "that I have been present at your meetings, and I wish to tell you with how much interest I have listened to you and your colleagues; but," added he, "I should have liked to see our Catholic priests defend their points, and to know what you would have replied to them." "If the priests," said I to him, "do not accept the Word of God as the common ground of discussion, we would not argue with them, for God has not given any other foundation for our faith in the doctrines of the truth. If, on the contrary, they accept it, all discussion is quickly settled, for not only can they not base the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the Word of God, but they have against them numerous and striking texts which condemn them." Then followed a most interesting conversation, which ended in the gentleman declaring,

"I also have had religious convictions from my childhood. In youth I rejected certain ordinances of my Church, without

abandoning the faith, and I see to-day that I am much more Protestant at heart than Catholic."

Unfortunately I did not think of taking his address, and he has probably returned to the provinces, for I have not seen him again.

These testimonies will suffice to show that we have not sown in vain. The work accomplished in hearts, beyond our knowledge, must be considerable, and we realise the sure promise of our God, that "His Word shall not return to Him void." Instead of the thorn shall spring up the myrtle tree; the desert shall flourish, and the mountains, echoing with songs of joy, shall proclaim the glorious name of the Lord.

We hope soon to have a missionary boat, which will remain in France. Already an appeal for this has appeared in *The Christian*, which has obtained some return. Among our friends God has given us an excellent captain. He and his wife are ready to leave their home, and spend their lives on our rivers and canals, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Some of us are willing to give our holiday time to work on the boat. A few hundred pounds more and the salvation boat, constructed, equipped, and superbly adapted for its work, will carry, along our shores and to our inland towns, the glorious message of the Gospel of Peace.

I cannot finish this long letter without taking advantage of this opportunity of conveying to our brothers and sisters on the other side of the channel our warm thanks for all that they have done for our nation. "*Merçi*," continue your prayers and sympathy. In the last days you will see the ripening of the harvest, and under your eyes many precious sheaves will be gathered into the eternal garner.

By J. SAINTON.

### Our New Pantin Salle.

THE end of June found us busy with our "déménagement," at Pantin. We were not at all sorry to leave the old hall which had greatly fallen into disrepair, and was besides damp, dark, and airless. So the new hall was all the more appreciated when it was opened, not only by us workers, but by the people themselves, who flocked in crowds to find places the night of the inauguration. The sight of Dr. and Mrs. McAll is always a welcome one at any meeting, but especially so on such an occasion as this; for Dr. McAll never seems to appear to greater advantage than when fallow ground has to be broken up by establishing a new hall, or when reinstating the work at some old landmark, by the enlargement of our station. And thus it was that night at Pantin. To the last moment every one was busy. Miss Pearce was occupied with last touches to the curtains, texts, etc., a band of willing workers round her, while some of the members of the "Union Chrétienne des Jeunes Filles," were preparing little bouquets of wild flowers, which they had prettily arranged to form the tricolor, to be given to the audience. Three large bouquets were kept for Mrs. McAll and the lady workers. All looked bright and joyful, and many hearts rejoiced to think that new days were dawning for the much degraded and unenlightened Pantin; for you must understand Pantin is a wretched place, the very name conveys to the initiated ear all that is sinful and wicked. Here murders have been committed, even more wholesale and cold-blooded than usual, and when one is told that it is the only hall in the whole mission which has had some years ago to be shut up for rowdiness, one can imagine to what a pitch things must have gone ere Dr. McAll could issue such an order. Pantin lies just outside the fortifications, the place where all the scum and wicked-doers of a fortified city congregate, in order to perpetrate their evil purposes with less of

police surveillance than inside the walls. But, though Satan as a strong man armed has taken possession here, yet a stronger than he has by His death on the Cross taken possession too, and the fight between light and darkness goes on, till we know with certainty One alone shall conquer.

By the change of hall into a better quarter, we seem, to judge from outward appearances, to have gained much. The meetings are larger, the old friends invite others to come with them to see the new and nicely arranged hall, and sometimes we have had to make the children vacate their chairs and sit round the platform, so as to accommodate the large audience. It is encouraging all this, and though two policemen are needed to help in keeping order outside the door, yet inside all is still, and the people so attentive, their very demeanour speaks, "It is good for us to be here."

Being summer, the Mothers' Meeting is closed; but during all last winter the old hall was so full on Monday afternoons that new members had to be refused, and no more attentive mothers have we seen in any other hall. While Miss Pearce was speaking, every eye was fixed upon her, as each seemed to drink in the message from her lips; it seemed from the looks on the mothers' faces as if they found it the nicest part of the meeting when the sewing was put away, and the Bibles and hymn-books were handed round.

The members of the weekly meetings of "L'Union Chrétienne des Jeunes Filles" had their little fête in the new hall on 8th July. We had hired a piano for the occasion, and friends helped us with violin and voices to vary the usual Tuesday programme. The girls decorated the hall, and garlands from end to end gave a festive look to everything. They also recited different pieces, and very well they managed their parts; they also sang very sweetly, and did all they could to give pleasure to their friends, whom they had honoured with an invitation.

The school-work has also received an



impetus by the change of salle, and from 80 to 110 children come together at five o'clock on Sundays and Tuesdays to have their Scripture lessons. Such wild, young savages they are to be sure. We have had to do with children of various nationalities in our wanderings, including Armenian and Greek boys, but really we think the Pantin species beats them all! One would need eyes everywhere, and all at one time; but the new hall seems to have solemnisised them not a little, and to have inspired them with more reverence and self-respect, for which we "thank God and take courage."

Thus you see how full of hope we are for Pantin; we consider the work there just now at a crisis, and much needing prayer. The people are crowding in, and we rejoice with trembling, feeling how surely the Gospel message they hear must be to them "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." As one glances over the motley throng gathered at our meetings, one cannot help attaching histories of the various individual life-experiences to each one there; cannot help reading, as it were, the heart-sorrow and gladness written out in the lives of those whose faces are eagerly fixed upon the speakers, waiting, quiet with expectant interest. God only, who made them and planned their lives, can send home messages to young and old alike, suited to their varied experiences. He can take a human mind and think through it, and human lips and speak through them, and in this alone lies our confidence at every step of the work.

Close by our salle is a horrid ball-room, a very hell of iniquity; often young men and women, in passing to it to seek an evening's enjoyment (?), come to our meetings till the hour for the dance music to begin. We have seen the same faces come again and again, which makes us hope that new desires after a better life have been awakened, and that their eye has fallen upon the bright text on the wall at the door, "Him that cometh to Me," &c., telling them of Christ's willingness to receive even those whom George Whit-

field once described as "the devil's castaways."  
By E. M. P.

### The Medical Mission at St. Etienne.

ST. ETIENNE, in spite of its large population (120,000), has maintained the characteristics of a country town, with all its prejudices and ignorance. However, amongst the many, there are not wanting those who have a real desire to know the Truth, and to be fixed on the question of the salvation of their souls.

I have found from ten years' experience in French evangelisation that the Roman Catholic requires a double conversion before he can stand on his feet. Am I wrong to say that after his first conversion, he requires to fall again in order to learn the lesson that he cannot count on his own strength? In any case, the most ardent to-day in my work are those who have fallen into temptation after having given open testimony of their conversion, and who now are walking more humbly and more sincerely with the Lord. Peter's confidence in himself is the confidence of many of our new converts.

Besides our three salles, in which meetings are nightly held, we have a dispensary open twice a-week, where patients from all sides come. There is nothing of the kind opened elsewhere in the town, except at the hospital, but I have a different and better class of patients to that which frequents the hospital. This dispensary is managed in the same way as every other medical mission—preaching of the Gospel in the morning before the consultation, and the good work is continued throughout the consultation time by a very earnest Christian. But this mission has one feature which I would like to see repeated elsewhere, and that is, it is *self-supporting*, as far as the drugs are concerned. Each patient receives a card, for which a small sum is paid (fivepence), so that by the end of the month I have enough to pay the medicine bill. Until I adopted that

plan I was often anxious about the bills I had to meet. However, no patient is on any account refused, those who cannot pay the above small sum, which is extremely rare, are received as well as the others. The number of patients did not diminish since I began this method, nor has any demur been made about it by any of them. Thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Robertson, of London, each new patient is given a New Testament, while tracts are freely distributed. All those who live in the vicinity of the salles are invited to the meetings, but they do not all come, I regret to say; if they did our halls would be filled every night. They come readily for their bodies, but they care little for their souls. Of the Word of God they are utterly ignorant, no Pagan ever was more so. They have to be each time specially told that Book is the Word of God, and that it is given them to be the guide of their life. However, we have been allowed to see some very good fruit as the result of the Medical Mission. A great many of our converts first heard the Gospel through its agency. The history of several of them has been given from time to time in the yearly reports.

The Night Refuge, which for the last four years has been established in St. Etienne, is a direct outcome of the McAll Mission here. In the year 1886, a great crisis occurred in every kind of commerce in the town. Thousands of hands were idle, and the distress was terrible. I called together once a-week all the starving men found about the streets, and, after speaking to them on the love of God, distributed soup tickets. The hall was crowded each time by the most miserable set I ever saw. One night, when the snow was on the ground, it occurred to me to ask if there were many present who did not know where to sleep

that night. About twenty stood up, saying that they had to spend their nights in the police station, or in the brick kilns which surround the town. My heart bled for them, and, after earnest prayer, I set about trying to do something for them. It was no easy task, as I was a stranger in the town and a Protestant—two facts which handicapped me heavily. But the Lord was on my side, and, after having been discouraged by, I regret to say, the pastors of the town, He directed me to a barrister of considerable reputation, who, after a little trouble, consented to join his name with mine in an appeal to the generosity of the citizens. Four months subsequently the Refuge was opened with thirty good beds, which were immediately filled. Later on, six beds for women were added, and now it has become a regular recognised institution, receiving subsidies from the town. I hope this winter to be able to do something for the discharged prisoners.—By Dr. HASTINGS BURROUGH.

### Who will Help the Paris Christmas Trees?

LAST year a large number of pretty gifts were sent from the young people of England to gladden the hearts of the dear French children at their bright Christmas fêtes, and this year we hope even more responses will be received to our appeal. Small dolls, bags for books, balls, little work-cases fitted up, boxes of pens or pencils for the boys, stockings, comforters, &c., will be gladly received and forwarded, if sent to Mrs. R. McAll, 17 Tressillian Crescent, St. John's, London, S.E., not later than 1st December. We find that marbles must be excluded this year, as they are too heavy to be worth the carriage, and they can easily be procured in Paris.

CONTRIBUTIONS towards the deficit on the year's account, or for the general funds, are received by the Rev. R. W. McALL, D.D., 28 Villa Molitor, Auteuil, Paris; FRANK A. BEVAN, Esq., 54 Lombard Street, E.C.; Messrs. MORGAN & SCOTT, 12 Paternoster Buildings, E.C.; and by Mrs. ROBERT McALL, 17 Tressillian Crescent, St. John's, London, S.E.